

City of Seattle

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of Checklist:

The State Environmental Policy Action (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requires all governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions. An environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared for all proposals with probable significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment. The purpose of this checklist is to provide information to help you and the agency identify impacts from your proposal (and to reduce or avoid impacts from the proposal, if it can be done) and to help the agency decide whether an EIS is required.

Instructions for Applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Governmental agencies use this checklist to determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant, requiring preparation of an EIS. Answer the questions briefly, with the most precise information known, or give the best description you can.

You must answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. In most cases, you should be able to answer the questions from your own observations or project plans without the need to hire experts. If you really do not know the answer, or if a question does not apply to your proposal, write “do not know” or “does not apply.” Complete answers to the questions now may avoid unnecessary delays later.

Some questions ask about permanent regulations, such as zoning, shoreline, and landmark designations. Answer these questions if you can. If you have problems, the governmental agencies can assist you.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:

Complete this checklist for nonproject proposals, even though questions may be answered “does not apply.” In addition, complete the Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions (part D).

For nonproject actions, the references in the checklist to the words “project”, “applicant,” and “property or site” should be read as “proposal,” “proposer,” and “affected geographic area,” respectively.

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Amendments to incentive provisions for the Downtown Harborfront 2 (DH2) zone and the Pioneer Square Mixed (PSM) 85-120 zone.

2. Name of applicant:

City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

City of Seattle
Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000
PO Box 34019
Seattle, Washington 98124-4019
Contact: Dennis Meier, 684-8270

4. Date checklist prepared:

August 24, 2012

5. Agency requesting checklist:

City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

City Council consideration is expected to begin its review in the third quarter of 2012.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

The proposal is a non-project action that is not dependent upon any further action.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

The information provided in this checklist.

- 9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.**

The legislation would apply to two zones located within Downtown Seattle, the DH2 zone and the PSM 85-120 zone. Currently, there is no known activity with development permit applications in the DH2 zone. In the PSM 85-120 zone, there is a permitted mixed-use project with an initial phase of development currently under construction; later phases of the project would potentially be affected by the proposed changes. The legislation primarily addresses issues related to the use of bonus provisions in these two zones, which would potentially affect projects subject to these provisions.

- 10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.**

Approval by Seattle City Council and Mayor, as amendments to Seattle's Land Use Code.

- 11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the site of the project. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)**

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) is proposing minor amendments to Section 23.49.011, 23.49.013, 23.49.014, and 23.49.181 of Chapter 23.49 Downtown Zoning of the current Seattle Land Use Code (SMC, Title 23) to correct oversights from previous amendments and provide additional flexibility to facilitate the use of incentive provisions within the Downtown Harborfront 2 (DH2) zone and the Pioneer Square Mixed (PSM) 85-120 zone.

The changes to 23.49.011, 23.49.013, and 23.49.014 would exempt residential use from FAR calculations and reestablish incentive provisions for nonresidential uses in the DH2 zone to enable projects to gain the extra floor area permitted above the current base FAR limit. Previous Code amendments inadvertently eliminated the original provisions that regulated how projects could gain extra floor area above the base FAR without providing any alternative mechanism. Section 23.49.011 Floor area ratio would be amended to include the DH2 zone among the other

downtown zones that exempt residential use from FAR calculations, thereby making it unnecessary for residential development to use incentives to gain extra floor area. Sections 23.49.011 Floor area ratio, 23.49.013 Bonus floor area for amenities and 23.49.014 Transfer of development rights would also be amended to include the DH2 zone among the other downtown zones where non-residential uses must achieve extra floor area above the base FAR through the use of incentives established in the Downtown Code.

Section 23.49.181 Bonus floor area for affordable housing in the PSM 85-120 zone applies to a specific mapped area within the PSM 85-120 zone in the Pioneer Square Special Review District, and establishes the affordable housing bonus provisions that enable development in this mapped area to gain added height and extra residential floor area. The amendments to Section 23.49.181 are intended to accomplish the following:

- correct an oversight in a previous amendment to this section regarding the affordable housing that is used to gain bonus residential floor area in one project but is provided at an off-site location in another project, to clarify which of the projects is subject to the requirement to maintain the affordable housing for a minimum of 50 years;
- provide additional flexibility for a project using the affordable housing bonus by removing the 70 unit limit on the number of affordable housing units that can be located off-site and still meet both the City and County conditions for affordable housing, thereby allowing all of the affordable housing units required by the City to be provided at an off-site location; and
- facilitate the construction of an affordable housing project in the South Downtown area by allowing more of the floor area in the project to be used, by development in the mapped area within the PSM 85-120 zone, to gain extra residential floor area.

TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT:

EVALUATION FOR
AGENCY USE ONLY

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

This is not a project; therefore no direct impacts from this proposal are anticipated.

1. Earth

a. General description of the site (circle one):

Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous,
other: _____

The earth characteristics for the affected areas vary significantly. The PSM 85-120 zone is primarily flat, while lots in the DH2 zone are generally flat, although many abut a steep bluff along Elliott Avenue on the eastern edge of the zone. The proposed amendments would not increase the potential for earth impacts in future potential development.

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

See the response to question 1.a. above.

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any prime farmland.

Soils conditions vary considerably throughout the City and typically include a mix of glacial till found in the urban Seattle area. No agricultural soil or prime/unique farmland is present in the City. The Pioneer Square affected vicinity includes fill soils above the vicinity's former tidelands.

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

Responses to questions above suggest proximity to sloping bluff and former tideland with fill. Both of these suggest potential for soil instability during seismic events, but there are not significant indicators of actively unstable soils in the affected area.

e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

No filling or grading is proposed for this programmatic non-project action. Future development consistent with this proposal might occur over time but cannot be evaluated regarding erosion at this stage. Such projects will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as subsequent environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review).

f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

The potential for erosion is site-specific and would need to be evaluated on a project-by-project basis. The proposed amendments would not likely significantly increase the potential for, or amount of, erosion for any potential future development in the affected area. Thus, the increment of change due to this proposal is zero.

g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

None identified for this proposed non-project action that does not involve construction activity. Future potential development would be subject to SEPA review on a site-specific basis if it exceeds thresholds for environmental review.

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

None proposed for this non-project action.

2. Air

a. What type of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

None identified for this proposed non-project action that does not involve construction activity. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review) and existing odor and emissions requirements currently contained in the Land Use Code and promulgated by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency as they move forward. A SEPA Greenhouse Gas Emissions Worksheet is required for all individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal.

b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

None that are known.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

None proposed for this non-project action. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review).

3. Water

a. Surface:

1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

The DH2 zone is just east of Elliott Bay and the Alaskan Way right-of-way, which abuts the Urban Harborfront shoreline environment.

2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

No. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

None. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

The affected locations are not known to be within a 100-year floodplain, although the Pioneer Square location is relatively low and is the site of former tidelands that were filled many decades ago. There is no site plan for this non-project action.

6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

No. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

b. Ground:

1) Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals ...; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

None. The entire city of Seattle is served by a sewage system, generally with sewer mains. The proposed legislation will not change existing regulations on septic tanks or waste material discharge.

c. Water Runoff (including storm water):

1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if

known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity. Thus, there is no change in the potential for future runoff from the affected area related to this proposal.

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

No. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, or runoff water impacts, if any:

None proposed. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review).

4. Plants

a. Check or circle types of vegetation found on the site:

X deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
X evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
X shrubs
X grass
pasture
crop or grain
wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk
cabbage, other
water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
other types of vegetation

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

None. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

The affected area does not contain notable habitat for threatened or endangered plant species.

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

None proposed. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review).

5. Animals

a. Circle any birds and animals that have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:

The affected area is developed and urban in character, but may have open areas visited by small animals such as rats, mice, seagulls, and other birds.

b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

None specifically known. The non-project proposal is not expected to impact threatened or endangered species. Chinook salmon in Puget Sound are listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Bald Eagles are known to exist within the city limits.

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

None known, although potentially birds could use portions of the affected area, to the extent it is open and/or unpaved, or with vegetation.

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

None proposed. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review).

6. Energy and Natural Resources

a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

No added uses identified for this non-project action. Areas within the City of Seattle are served by electric and natural gas utilities. Any future development that might occur in the affected areas would be likely to use these sources of energy.

b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

No. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

None proposed. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review).

7. Environmental Health

a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.

None identified. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity. Future development projects may be subject to environmental review, the City's Environmentally Critical Areas Ordinance, and other requirements. Future development projects will need to comply with project-specific environmental regulations. Zoning or development regulation changes in the proposed legislation are unlikely to result in environmental health hazards as part of the site development for an individual project.

1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

As a non-project action, no emergency services are required by this amendment. In general, emergency service providers including the Fire and Police Departments will review the effects of future potential increased development and propose enhanced services as necessary as part of their planning for future service needs, and/or specific protective needs for particular properties.

2) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

None proposed for this non-project action.

b. Noise

1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment operation, other)?

Because this proposal is a non-project action, it would not be a project nor be affected by noise.

2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from site.

None. See the response to 7.b.1 above.

3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

None proposed for this non-project action. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review).

8. Land and Shoreline Use

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?

The affected area includes bluff and flatter areas near Elliott Bay but east of Alaskan Way, plus a given area in Pioneer Square that has been a parking lot for decades, but is currently under construction with a mixed-use development proposal, just south of S. King Street. Uses nearby include a mix of commercial

and residential structures in the Elliott Bay vicinity, and a mixture of primarily non-residential uses in the Pioneer Square vicinity.

b. Has the site been used for agriculture? If so, describe.

No, such past uses are not known to have occurred.

c. Describe any structures on the site.

This proposal is not site-specific. The affected area in the PSM 85-120 zone was previously a surface parking area that is being redeveloped as a multi-structure, mixed use project. The DH2 zone is occupied by a mix of structures from many development periods, including old waterfront warehouse structures, most of which are now occupied by a variety of institutional and commercial uses. The most recent development from the mid-1990s includes new mid-rise residential structures, a hotel, and several office buildings and parking structures.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

No. This proposal is not site-specific. Structures will not be demolished as a result of this action, although a major redevelopment is currently underway on a multi-acre lot in the PSM 85-120 zone. In the DH2 zone, additional lots could be redeveloped in the future, although redevelopment opportunities are limited and not specifically known at this time.

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

This proposal addresses two zones in Downtown Seattle, the Downtown Harborfront 2 (DH2) zone and a mapped location within the Pioneer Square Mixed (PSM) 85-120 zone.

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Both zones are located within the Downtown Urban Center. The DH2 zones are located within the Belltown Urban Center Village, and the PSM 85-120 zone is located within the Pioneer Square Urban Center Village.

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

No changes are proposed to the shoreline master program. The DH2 zone is located at or near the edge of the Urban Harborfront shoreline environment. Where there are differences or inconsistencies between underlying zoning regulations and the shoreline master program, the shoreline regulations prevail.

h. Has any part of the site been classified as an "environmentally sensitive" area? If so, specify.

The city's critical areas mapping indicate liquefaction prone zones in both the DH2 and PSM 85-120 zones. The DH2 zones also include some steep slope locations. The proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

None identified for this non-project action.

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

None identified for this non-project action.

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

None proposed. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and project land uses and plans, if any:

None proposed. The proposed Land Use Code amendments have been reviewed for consistency with Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Policies and adopted neighborhood plans. The primary purpose of the proposed amendments is to facilitate use of incentive provisions for development in the two affected zones.

9. Housing

No additional units are expected as a result of implementing the proposed amendments. By allowing more of the affordable housing units provided to gain extra bonus floor area in a project to be located off-site, the amendments in the PSM 85-120 zone could affect the number of affordable housing units on a project site that is already under construction, with the potential for on-site development to include fewer affordable units and more market rate units.

For additional discussion on the Pioneer Square proposal's housing-related impacts, see the response to question D.5 in the non-project impact discussion near the end of this checklist.

10. Aesthetics

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?**

The proposal is a non-project action and thus does not apply to any particular proposed structure. Also, see the response to question 10.b below.

- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?**

None, because the proposal is a non-project action. Future potential development of individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review). The effect of the proposal would not increase the maximum height above what would be otherwise possible – if bonusing was properly available as generally intended by the Land Use Code in the DH2 zone, and due to no changes in the PSM height limits. By correcting an error in bonusing capability, the effect upon the DH2 zone would be to restore an ability to go above the base density level for the first time in several years, if a future development proposes to do so. This carries with it an increase in the potential sizing of future development, but one that merely restores a capability that was thought to be present but was not actually present.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:**

None proposed. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review).

11. Light and Glare

This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review).

12. Recreation

This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity. Individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal will be subject to the city's codes and ordinances as well as environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review).

13. Historic and Cultural Preservation

- a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe.**

This proposal is a non-project action affecting the Downtown Harborfront 2 zone, and a portion of the Pioneer Square Mixed zone. In the latter area, the proposal affects the regulations of the PSM 85-120 zone, a portion of which is located in the Pioneer Square Preservation District. Nearby structures, such as along S. King Street and Occidental Avenue S. south of S. King Street are generally afforded historic protections and recognition as part of that district. In the DH2 zone, the Ainsworth and Dunn Warehouse (Spaghetti Factory) has been nominated for designation as a Seattle Landmark.

- b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.**

See the response to question 13.a above regarding known landmarks and areas of historic significance. Most older warehouse structures in the DH2 zone have been inventoried and evaluated for historic or architectural significance in the Historic Resources Inventory conducted for Downtown. The Ainsworth and Dunn Warehouse was identified as having historic significance and has since been nominated for designation as a Seattle Landmark.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any:**

None, because the proposed non-project amendments are not expected to significantly adversely impact historic/landmark structures. Individual projects will undergo SEPA review, as required. All future development is required to comply with local, state, and national regulations that require mitigation of impacts on historic and cultural resources.

14. Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe the proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.**

The city is well-served by an urban street system and street classification system.

- b. Is site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?**

The City is currently well-served by King County Metro and Sound Transit bus service and by Sound Transit regional commuter rail facilities.

- c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?**

None for this non-project action. However, future development proposals will be expected to meet the applicable parking requirements under the existing code. Projects and development consistent with this proposal will occur over time and cannot be evaluated in terms of parking impacts at this stage.

- d. Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to existing roads or streets, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).**

No.

- e. Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.**

No. This proposal is a non-project action.

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.**

None identified. This proposal is a non-project action and does not involve construction or development activity.

g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any.

None proposed. Future development projects will be subject to environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review for traffic and transportation impacts), and will need to meet transportation concurrency requirements.

15. Public Services

a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

No new public services would be required for this non-project action. Projects and development consistent with this proposal will occur over time and cannot be evaluated in terms of increased need for public services at this stage.

b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

None proposed. Please see the response to question 15.a above.

16. Utilities

a. Utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other.

These utilities, except septic system, are available to the affected area. The proposed amendments are a non-project action. Individual projects developed pursuant to this proposal would be served by utilities including electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, and sanitary sewer.

b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in immediate vicinity which might be needed.

In general, utility providers, such as Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and Washington Natural Gas review probable future development needs, and propose enhanced services as necessary as part of their planning for future service needs. This non-project action will not create the need for additional utility services.

C. Signature

Signature provided following section D below.

D. SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS

(Do not use this sheet for project actions)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

The proposed amendments, as a non-project action would not directly affect discharges to water; emissions to air (including greenhouse gas emissions [GHG]); production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise. To the extent that the DH2 changes could enable fuller use of bonusing provisions and development capacity, it could increase the likelihood that future development would happen on certain properties, e.g., those that would be considered most redevelopable given their site characteristics and existing real estate valuations. It is estimated that potential redevelopment sites are less than 8 percent of the total lot area in the DH2 zone, and these sites are located in areas where the height limits are lowest, ranging from 55 to 85 feet.

This would increase the likelihood that construction-related disturbances would occur that would generate air emissions, potential site runoff increases, and increased noise during the construction period. However, given that these impacts could also occur in approximately comparable levels with future development under current zoning rules, there is not an increment of added impact potential that should be identified as adverse or significant adverse.

Individual future development projects that may use the land use and zoning provisions of the proposal could occur over time, but their details are not known and cannot be precisely evaluated in terms of probable added amounts of discharge to water, emissions to air, production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances, or noise, at this stage. Such projects will be subject to environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review) as they move forward.

No potential for adverse environmental effects of this kind are identified for proposed regulatory changes in the Pioneer Square zoning, due to their focus on clarifying details with respect to future locations of certain kinds of housing, and not notably increasing future development capabilities in the built environment.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

No proposed measures are proposed beyond existing regulations at this time because the proposal does not involve any construction or development activity. A SEPA GHG Emissions Worksheet is required for all individual projects that may use the provisions of this proposal. Any potential impacts from GHG emissions will be addressed during review of future development proposals on a project-specific basis.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

Enactment of the proposed amendments is unlikely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life. The area is developed and urban in character. The proposal does not alter existing protections to plants, animals, fish or marine life. The rationales expressed in the response to question D.1 also apply, in that future development of any kind in a DH2 zone lot would generate site disturbances that would be approximately comparable, whether or not the proposed amended zoning provisions would be present. At most, it could be speculated that added residential or non-residential presence on a development site might generate an additional increment of traffic or similar activity that might incrementally add to factors such as pollutant deposition onto nearby city streets. To the extent this might occur on any given site, it could be reviewed more specifically during future reviews of development proposals. Also, it would be generally anticipated that standard practices and requirements for directing runoff on a site and for local streets' drainage would provide water quantity and/or quality control measures that would tend to avoid potential adverse impacts upon nearby resources and habitats in Elliott Bay.

No potential for adverse environmental effects of this kind are identified for proposed regulatory changes in the Pioneer Square zoning, due to their focus on clarifying details with respect to future locations of certain kinds of housing, and not notably increasing future development capabilities in the built environment.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

No measures are proposed beyond existing regulations at this time because the proposal does not involve any construction or development activity. The City and other regulatory agencies have existing regulations to protect these resources.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

The proposed amendments would not affect energy or natural resources. To the extent that the DH2 provisions might enable a greater future development density, such sites could consume more energy and resources on a per-site basis. This does not attempt to account for locational advantages that might mean these sites are more efficient places to develop than other parts of the region. What this means is that, consistent with growth management principles, providing denser development in centers such as Seattle's dense Downtown center, are proportionately more efficient in controlling energy consumption for actions like employees' commuting and residents' commuting than other more far-flung locations within the metropolitan region. This is due to the greater consumption of fuel resources and related detrimental effects upon the environment, on average, for locations away from urban centers.

No potential for adverse environmental effects of this kind are identified for proposed regulatory changes in the Pioneer Square zoning, due to their focus on clarifying details with respect to future locations of certain kinds of housing, and not notably increasing future development capabilities in the built environment.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

No measures to protect or conserve energy are proposed beyond existing regulations for this non-project action.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

The proposed ordinance would not affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated for government protection. The DH2 zoned vicinity is near, but not within, marine shoreline areas (except for possible occasional slight intrusions into buffer areas of shoreline jurisdiction).

No potential for adverse environmental effects of this kind are identified for proposed regulatory changes in the Pioneer Square zoning, due to their focus on clarifying details with respect to future locations of certain kinds of housing, and not notably increasing future development capabilities in the built environment.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

No resource protection measures are proposed beyond existing regulations for this non-project action.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

No incompatible uses would be allowed or encouraged by these amendments. No site-specific proposals are proposed at this time. The effect of the DH2 proposal would be to re-enable development reaching maximum density levels according to Downtown zoning provisions. This ability had been unwittingly prevented by past changes in wording of Downtown zoning provisions, which had limited potential development only to “base” zoning levels rather than maximum zoning levels. Such a restoration of development capability could be evaluated as correcting an error such that no additional development potential has been added; or, it can be evaluated as adding an increment of additional development capacity that increases total future development capacity. In either case, the proposal would be accommodating levels of development in a manner that is likely to remain compatible with other nearby development patterns, and consistent with development patterns and intensity that are encouraged by current land use plans and policies. One potential housing-related effect of the proposal could be to indirectly induce future development that would include greater numbers of housing than would otherwise occur under existing rules. In terms of housing impacts, this outcome would represent a positive impact and an impact that is consistent with land use and housing-related policies of the City’s neighborhood planning and comprehensive planning.

The land use effects of the Pioneer Square proposal would be to adjust regulatory capabilities in a manner that would be more likely to foster affordable housing development in a property or properties in the South Downtown area (which would represent a positive outcome without substantive adverse impact potential), and would allow satisfaction of requirements off-site in relation to another property that is already undergoing development. The latter aspect could mean that other housing presumably affordable to higher-income households would be provided instead. While housing policy and regulation, including what levels of housing are encouraged where, is addressed by numerous City rules, policies and neighborhood planning in South Downtown neighborhoods, there is little if any potential for adverse outcomes of the proposal with respect to future housing in the affected neighborhoods.

One policy aspect to note is the advocacy of the Pioneer Square neighborhood plan for greater balance in the availability of housing for all incomes in the neighborhood, to overcome an actual imbalance that has concentrated available housing in lower-income

levels. The property primarily affected by this proposal, which is already under construction, will provide more housing for households across mid- and higher-income categories, and would thus assist in improving the balance of housing, consistent with the neighborhood plan. In this light, the proposed amendment is an action that would be consistent with housing-related policies, without adverse impact potential, and actually encouraging of positive land use-related impacts.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and use impacts are:

No land use-related mitigation measures are proposed beyond existing regulations at this time. Future development projects would be subject to design review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review), which would allow for analysis and potential requirement of mitigation measures as needed to help mitigate adverse impacts of future development.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

The proposed ordinance would not directly affect transportation or public services because it is a non-project action. Using rationales such as those expressed in the responses to questions D.1 and D.5 above, future development that could be incrementally larger in the DH2 zone, due to the effects of this proposal, than could be built today would generate a potential for increased future traffic generation and demands upon public services and utilities. This would occur to the extent that the difference between the “base” density and the maximum density in the DH2 zone would be utilized in any future development that occurs in the DH2 zone. Some development might occur but it might not use all of the additionally available density; and it may be anticipated that certain properties would remain undeveloped over the long-term either due to their site characteristics or the presence of viable existing structures that would discourage development. Given the uncertainties, no additional speculative analysis of more specific impacts on transportation or public services is necessary at this time. Such analysis would be possible on a site-by-site basis if future development is proposed and undergoes environmental review.

No potential for adverse environmental effects of this kind are identified for proposed regulatory changes in the Pioneer Square zoning, due to their focus on clarifying details with respect to future locations of certain kinds of housing, and not notably increasing future development capabilities in the built environment.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

In general, providers of utilities and public services, including fire protection, police protection, health care, schools regularly review the effects of increased development and propose enhanced services as necessary as part of their planning for future service needs.

Future site-specific development projects will need to meet the City's concurrency requirements for transportation, utilities, and public services infrastructure. As the proposal does not directly involve any construction or development activity, nor are specific future developments known for the DH2 zone, no specific measures are proposed at this time.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

No conflicts are identified or anticipated.

SIGNATURE:

I, the undersigned, state that to the best of my knowledge the above information is true and complete. It is understood that the lead agency may withdraw any declaration of non-significance that it might issue in reliance upon this checklist should there be any willful misrepresentation or willful lack of full disclosure on my part.

_____, 2012
Dennis Meier
Strategic Advisor I
Date

This checklist was reviewed by:

_____, 2012
Planner, City of Seattle
Department of Planning and Development